

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 7

Honolulu, Hawaii

OCT 05 2020

RE: JUD. COM. NO. 6

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirtieth State Legislature
First Special Session of 2020
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred Judiciary Communication No. 6, submitting for study and consideration the appointment of:

DISTRICT FAMILY COURT OF THE FIRST CIRCUIT

J.C. No. 6 ELIZABETH PAEK-HARRIS,
for a term to expire in 6 years,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal history, resume, and statement submitted by Elizabeth Paek-Harris for appointment to the District Family Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawaii.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the appointment of Elizabeth Paek-Harris from Hawai'i Women Lawyers and thirty-two individuals. Your Committee received comments on the appointment of Elizabeth Paek-Harris from the Board of Directors of the Hawaii State Bar Association.

The Hawaii State Bar Association Board of Directors found the appointee to be qualified for the position of District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit based on established criteria for determining the qualifications of judicial appointments generally using the American Bar Association Guidelines for Reviewing Qualifications of Candidates for State Judicial Office. Specifically, the Board uses the following criteria in its deliberations: integrity and diligence, legal knowledge and ability, professional experience, judicial temperament, financial responsibility, public service, health, and ability to perform the



responsibilities and duties required of the position for which the applicant has been appointed. The Board's rating system includes the categories of "qualified" and "not qualified".

Ms. Paek-Harris received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Arts from The Evergreen State College, where she was the Co-Founder and Coordinator of Evergreen's Pre-Law Circle. She later received her Doctor of Jurisprudence from the William S. Richardson School of Law, where she was a Board Member, Editor, and Writer for the University of Hawai'i Law Review and received the CALI Excellence for the Future Award in Legal Writing. Ms. Paek-Harris has served as a *Per Diem* Family Court Judge in the District Family Court of the First Circuit since 2019.

Ms. Paek-Harris was an attorney in private practice from 2004 to 2019, and practiced primarily in the area of family law. She handled cases at the trial court and appellate levels, in addition to mediation. Her practice regularly required her to navigate a wide range of complex legal and factual issues, especially when handling divorce and child custody cases. As a *Per Diem* Family Court Judge, Ms. Paek-Harris presides primarily over divorce, paternity, domestic violence, adoption, guardianship, involuntary hospitalization, and termination of parental rights cases.

Ms. Paek-Harris has been active in the legal community throughout her career. She has served as a volunteer attorney for the Kapolei Access to Justice Room and Volunteer Legal Services of Hawaii. She has also been a volunteer mediator for the Mediation Center of the Pacific. In addition, she has served in numerous leadership roles in the Family Law and Child Law Sections of the Hawaii State Bar Association.

Testimony submitted in support of Ms. Paek-Harris's appointment commend her diligence and commitment to ethical advocacy. Throughout her career, she has earned a reputation for compassion, integrity, and open-mindedness. Numerous testifiers praised her depth of legal expertise and her consistent professionalism. Throughout her career, she has repeatedly demonstrated a deep commitment toward the provision of legal services to the people of the State.

Your Committee finds that, based on the testimony submitted on her behalf, responses to questions asked by the members of your Committee, and your Committee's review of information about her and her qualifications, Elizabeth Paek-Harris has the experience,



temperament, and other competencies to be a District Family Court Judge of the First Circuit, and she has the legal expertise, integrity, and demeanor to fully and faithfully discharge the duties associated with that judicial office.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the appointee, has found the appointee to be qualified for the position to which appointed and recommends that the Senate consent to the appointment.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary,



KARL RHOADS, Chair



